

Robert E. Webster, an employee of the Rand Development Company, made several trips to the Soviet Union in order to prepare for the 1959 U.S. Exhibition in Moscow. While there for seven weeks, beginning in May 1959, Webster steadily dated the hostess employed at the Hotel Ukraine's tourist restaurant. She worked there during the period correspondents accompanying Vice President Nixon's visit to the USSR resided there, and was suspected of being a KGB agent. Webster informed his girlfriend he wished to divorce his wife in the U.S. and return to the Soviet Union to marry her.

Webster first revealed his desire to defect on July 11, 1959. He approached the two Soviet officials in charge of arrangements for the Exhibition at the fairgrounds and requested information concerning the procedures for a U.S. citizen to remain in the USSR. Webster was told to call one of the officials in their Solkolniki Park office and a meeting was set up.

A few days later, the English -speaking official Webster had met previously, escorted him to a private room in a restaurant. A representative of the Soviet Government questioned him about his desire to remain in the Soviet Union. The representative was also interested in whether Webster had told other Americans of his interest to defect and instructed him not to. While foggy with vodka Webster was told to write a letter to the Supreme Soviet requesting to remain as a Soviet citizen. He did so, and was given a

biographic-data sheet to take with him and fill out.

Subsequently, Webster submitted the data sheet. He stated that his dissatisfaction with the U.S. was due to the tendency of American employers to hire a man and then fire him when he had learned the job. This reason was not acceptable because Webster had not personally experienced this. He rewrote the form to state that in the U.S., government controlled big business. He also wrote that he wished to work, marry, have children, earn a degree and learn the Russian language in the Soviet Union. Although he stated he wished to cooperate in every way with the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities tried to dissuade Webster from defecting.

In the last of July of early August, Webster attended what he described as a serious, no drinking meeting held in a private restaurant room at the Metropole Hotel. Webster told two Soviet chemists he could help them make the Rand spray gun he had demonstrated at the U.S. Exhibition. September 9th was told he had been accepted by the Soviets. Although he had requested to work in Moscow, Webster was informed he would be sent to Leningrad.

The following day the Soviet officials registered Webster at the Bucharist Hotel, and instructed him not to leave. He was given 1,000 old rubles and asked to write a note to a Rand employee requesting money be left for him at the hotel because he was on a tour of Russia.

There was a short party for Webster on September 11th. He was immediately flown to Leningrad with an interpreter and met by an Intourist representative. He applied for work at the Leningrad Scientific Research Institute, Polymerized Plastics and lived in the Baltiskaya Hotel for a month. He was allowed to call his girl friend and she was allowed to visit and make plans for a vacation.

On October 17, 1959 Webster was staying in Moscow. He attended a meeting at the Central Office, Visas and Registration (OVIR) with the original Soviet representative he had contact with, an unknown Soviet, H. J. Rand, his assistant George H. Bookbinder and Richard E. Snyder at the U. S. Embassy. Webster states he was free to speak, and told Snyder when he had applied for Soviet citizenship, ~~when he had been accepted and that he had been granted~~ a Soviet passport on September 21, 1959. ~~He states~~ He filled out a form entitled "Affidavit of Expatriated Person" and wrote his resignation to Rand Development Corporation.

Webster ^{later} explained ~~that he had lied in his affidavit.~~ He had no Soviet documentation at the time, having in his possession an American passport which he never sent to Snyder as requested. Webster states the Soviets had instructed him to say his reasons for defecting were political.

Webster's girlfriend joined him the following day and both went on a month vacation at the Suitland Sanitarium in Sochi. They returned to Leningrad and began work

at the institute, his girlfriend employed as an assistant and translator. Webster received 280 rubles per month and a semi-annual bonus of 50 to 60 rubles. He lived with his girlfriend in a new apartment building and had three rooms with a bath.

After writing a summary of his life, listing his relatives and where they worked, submitting pictures of himself and undergoing a medical examination, Webster was granted a Soviet internal passport, and on December 1959 or January 1960, he turned over his American passport and obtained the Soviet passport at the OVIR office in Leningrad.

On January 27, 1960, a letter was delivered to Webster from his father. It contained news of his mother's nervous breakdown and word that his father had assumed financial support of Webster's children. At that point, Webster decided to return to the United States.

A note in Webster's file states that on April 6, 1960, he was to give a speech on the United States, although there is no indication whether he, in fact, did.

The original Soviet representative in Moscow arranged for Webster and his girlfriend to visit there for the May Day celebration. Webster entered the U.S. Embassy unchallenged, due to his American clothing. He informed John McVicker that he wished to return to the United States. He was told to apply for a Soviet exit visa.

Webster requested two notarized invitations for his return to the United States, to be made by his father, copies to be sent to the American Embassy. His girlfriend helped him fill out

the application for a Soviet exit visa and gave her consent, which was required.

Webster's girlfriend gave birth to Svetlana Robertorna Webster in August 1960. The child was immediately adopted by Webster and registered. During the majority of the time after this, Svetlana's Russian grandmother also lived in the Webster apartment. Webster was assigned a new translator at the Institute.

Two months after submitting his application for a Soviet exit visa, Webster was turned down and told he could not reapply for one year. Soviet officials visited him from Moscow, inquiring why he was unhappy and suggesting that he send for his family from the United States. One year later, he reapplied, and in February 1962, Webster was granted a Soviet exit visa.

In March 1962, the American Embassy gave Webster instructions on how to obtain an American entrance visa. His father sent him a plane ticket for his passage home, and Webster quit his job. It was May before Webster actually surrendered his internal Soviet passport for his exit visa. Webster arrived in the United States as an alien on Russian quota on May 20, 1962. He had never intended to aid his girlfriend in leaving the Soviet Union.